

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-06 OES-06 SP-02

SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 PA-01 PRS-01 LAB-04

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INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USBERLIN

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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TAGS: TECH, ENRG, PINT, GW

SUBJECT: FRG POLITICIANS CHARY ABOUT NUCLEAR POWER
ISSUE

REF: BONN 21125 (1976); BONN 19408 (1976)

BEGIN SUMMARY. IT IS CUSTOMARY FOR TRENDS TO ARRIVE IN
THE FRG AFTER THEY HAVE APPEARED, AND OFTEN PEAKED, IN
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THE UNITED STATES. THIS SEEMS TO BE THE CASE WITH THE
CURRENT GERMAN DEBATE OVER THE FUTURE OF NUCLEAR POWER.
HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE SURPRISING IF THE GERMAN REACTION
TO THE NUCLEAR DEBATE WERE NOT MORE FAR-REACHING THAN
WAS THE CASE IN THE U.S. THE ISSUE IS VERY MUCH A
TWO-EDGED SWORD, AND POLITICIANS HERE ARE UNCERTAIN
HOW TO HANDLE IT. END SUMMARY.

1. THE GERMAN RESPONSE TO THE 1960'S STUDENT REVOLT, WHICH MANIFESTED ITSELF HERE IN THE SO-CALLED EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION (APO), RESULTED IN FAR-REACHING REFORMS OF THE GERMAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM AS WELL AS IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY BECAUSE OF THE LARGE INFLUX OF YOUNG APO ENTHUSIASTS. THE GERMAN PROPENSITY TO REACT WITH SWEEPING LEGAL AND SOCIAL REMEDIES, WHEN FACED WITH A NEW AND UNSETTLING SOCIAL PHENOMENON, COULD LEAD THE GERMANS TO TAKE FAR-REACHING ACTIONS AS A RESULT OF THE PRESENT DEBATE ON THE FUTURE OF NUCLEAR POWER.

2. THE NUCLEAR POWER ISSUE CUTS ACROSS PARTY LINES AND THUS CREATES A DILEMMA FOR POLITICIANS IN ALL FOUR MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES. ON THE ONE HAND, THE BREADTH AND DEPTH OF THE PUBLIC'S REJECTION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PRESENT POLICY STRIKES A RESPONSIVE CHORD AMONG OPPOSITION POLITICIANS AND AMONG SOME ELEMENTS WITHIN THE COALITION PARTIES. HOWEVER, THESE GROUPS REALIZE THAT THE CONSEQUENCES OF TAKING AN ANTI-NUCLEAR POWER POSITION ARE UNPREDICTABLE.

3. RECENTLY, A NUMBER OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LEFT-WINGERS MET IN A SUBURB OF BONN TO DISCUSS POLICY ISSUES. AS IT TURNED OUT, THEY WERE DIVIDED AS TO WHAT APPROACH THEY SHOULD TAKE ON THE NUCLEAR POWER ISSUE. SOME OF THE SPEAKERS, MANY OF WHOM HOLD HIGH POSITIONS IN THE BONN GOVERNMENT, PLEADED FOR A MODERATE APPROACH, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BOTH BECAUSE VOCAL CRITICISM FROM WITHIN THE SPD COULD HURT THE COALITION GOVERNMENT, AND BECAUSE AN ANTI-NUCLEAR POWER STAND WOULD ALIENATE THE TRADE UNIONS WHO FEAR THAT SUCH A POLICY WOULD MEAN FEWER JOBS. THE ANTI-NUCLEAR SPEAKERS ARGUED THAT THIS WAS AN ISSUE WHICH WAS OF DEEP CONCERN TO THE PUBLIC, AND A MORAL ISSUE WHICH SPD LEFTISTS CANNOT AVOID. THE RESULTS OF THE MEETING WERE INCONCLUSIVE.

4. IN ADDITION TO THE PROBLEM OF THE POTENTIAL ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES SHOULD A BAN BE PLACED ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF NUCLEAR POWER FACILITIES, THERE IS THE WHOLE QUESTION OF THE FORM PUBLIC OPPOSITION TO NUCLEAR POWER HAS TAKEN. THE IDEA OF PRIVATE CITIZENS BANDING TOGETHER IN ORDER TO TAKE POLITICAL ACTION IS A COMMON PRACTICE IN THE U.S. IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC, HOWEVER, POLITICAL LIFE IS MUCH MORE STRUCTURED AND IS FIRMLY IN THE CONTROL OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS THE POLITICAL PARTIES, THE TRADE UNIONS AND INTEREST GROUP ORGANIZA-

TIONS.

5. IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT THE EMERGENCE OF LARGE-
SCALE CITIZEN INITIATIVES ("BUERGERINITIATIVEN"),
LIKE THE APO IN THE LATE 1960'S, IS VIEWED AS THREATEN-
ING TO THE ORGANIZED POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENT. IF
CITIZENS BAND TOGETHER FOR THIS ISSUE, THEY MIGHT DO
SO ON OTHER ISSUES, THUS WEAKENING THE PARTY STRUCTURE

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IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC

6. THE DIVERSE ELEMENTS COLLECTED UNDER THE ANTI-NUCLEAR BANNER DO LITTLE TO REDUCE POLITICIANS' NERVOUSNESS. THEY INCLUDE ENVIRONMENTALISTS, CHURCH GROUPS, LOCAL CITIZENS (THE POPULATION DENSITY IN THE FRG MAKES IT ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND SPARSELY POPULATED SITES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO LOCATE NUCLEAR POWER STATIONS), ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT ROMANTICS AND HARD-CORE RADICALS. THE LATTER GROUP HAS ATTEMPTED TO USE THE DEMONSTRATIONS IN ORDER TO FORCE A VIOLENT CONFRONTATION WITH GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY. SOME THOUGHTFUL POLITICIANS FEAR THAT THE WIDE-SPREAD RESPONSE TO THE "BUERGERINITIATIVEN" REFLECTS A FEELING OF MALAISE AND IMPOTENCY ON THE PART OF THE ORDINARY CITIZEN. THIS FRUSTRATION WITH BIG GOVERNMENT AND IMPERSONAL BUREAUCRACY, THEY FEAR, COULD LEAD TO A GERMAN-STYLE POUJADIST MOVEMENT.

7. THE OPPOSITION PARTIES ARE NO LESS PERPLEXED ON HOW TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THE ISSUE. ON THE ONE HAND, CDU/CSU POLITICIANS, FOR THE MOST PART, BELIEVE THERE IS NO PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE TO NUCLEAR POWER WHICH WOULD SATISFY THE FRG'S FUTURE ENERGY NEEDS. IN ADDITION, RADICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE ANTI-NUCLEAR MOVEMENT ONLY CONFIRMS UNION POLITICIANS' VIEWS THAT THE DEMONSTRATIONS ARE A LEFT-WING ATTEMPT TO RESIST STATE AUTHORITY.

8. AT THE SAME TIME, THE LARGE NUMBER OF MIDDLE-CLASS PARTICIPANTS IN THE "BUERGERINITIATIVEN" AND THE HIGH LEVEL OF SUPPORT SUCH INITIATIVES HAVE RECEIVED IN PUBLIC OPINION POLLS ARE A WARNING TO OPPOSITION POLITICIANS THAT THEY MUST BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL IN DEALING WITH THE ISSUE. SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN MINISTER-PRESIDENT STOLTENBERG, WHO HAS BEEN A TARGET OF SOME OF THESE DEMONSTRATIONS, MUST BE CAREFUL THAT HIS SUPPORT FOR NUCLEAR POWER DOES NOT ALIENATE MIDDLE-CLASS VOTERS; OTHERWISE, HIS PARTY MIGHT SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES IN THE NEXT ELECTION.

9. AS POINTED OUT IN BONN 21125, PUBLIC VIEWS ON THE NUCLEAR POWER ISSUE ARE CONFUSED. ON THE ONE HAND, THERE IS GENERAL ACCEPTANCE THAT GERMANY WILL NEED NUCLEAR POWER IN THE FUTURE. ON THE OTHER, THE MAJORITY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF THE PEOPLE QUESTIONED SHOWED SYMPATHY FOR THE

"BUERGERINITIATIVEN." THE ATTEMPTS BY THE LAENDER TO SHIFT THE RESPONSIBILITY TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ARE UNLIKELY TO CONTRIBUTE TO A COHERENT AND REASONABLE NATIONAL NUCLEAR POWER POLICY. IT IS TOO SOON TO KNOW WITH ANY CONFIDENCE JUST HOW THE ISSUE WILL EVOLVE.

10. FOR ANALYSTS SUCH A SITUATION IS FRUSTRATING, BUT FOR POLITICIANS IT COULD BE POLITICALLY FATAL. THUS, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT THERE IS A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF THRESHING ABOUT AS POLITICIANS ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC ATTEMPT TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THE PROBLEM. THE COALITION PARTIES PLAN TO INTRODUCE THE SUBJECT OF NUCLEAR POWER POLICY IN THE BUNDESTAG SOMETIME IN MARCH. A DEBATE ON THE SUBJECT IS EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE AT THE END OF MARCH. PERHAPS A CLEARER PICTURE WILL EMERGE THEN AS TO WHERE THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC IS HEADING.
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